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ADAP: Mental Health cuts could put all at risk

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By Michael Doudna

MONTGOMERY, AL (WSFA) - According to the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Programs Director, additional cuts to mental health programs could put Alabamians at risk.

According to James Tucker, Director of the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Programs (ADAP), without at least level funding, the state would be unable to care for the 12,000 people relying on its services.

Tucker said mental health programs have been slashed by almost \$40 million in just over the last five years.

Tucker said if lawmakers decide more cuts are necessary, lawsuits would likely follow.

Lawmakers included a five percent cut of mental health when they passed their budget back in the regular session. That budget was vetoed by the governor, resulting in the current special session.

Shootings in Louisiana, Charleston, Newtown and Aurora have all been linked to mental health problems.

"If they don't get the services that they need, then we get those terrible outcomes we see occasionally from time to time throughout the country and even in our state," Tucker said.

Multiple lawmakers from the governor to Senator Pro Tem Del Marsh have come out voicing the support of mental health.

In an interview with WSFA last week, Sen. Marsh said he hopes to fully fund mental health.

Lawmakers are caucusing this week to go over plans for the general fund before they resume session on Aug. 3.

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